BRITISH COLUMBIA

Education Report

GETTING HEALTHY WITH ACTNOWBC

The ministries of education and health are working together to improve the long-term well being of British Columbia. As part of its ActNowBC program, the province is investing $3.8 million to develop a new healthy eating component of Action Schools! BC and help schools around the province buy additional physical activity equipment. One in four B.C. children, ages 2–17, is overweight or obese. Schools can influence how students exercise and eat—habits students may carry with them for the rest of their lives. ***Read more.***

Bond stretches with Grade 6 student Amanda Hou at Trafalgar elementary in Vancouver, March 21, 2006

HOT TOPIC

During my recent district and school visits, many parents, students and teachers told me they are confused about graduation portfolios. I heard this again on March 25 at the first-ever meeting with District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) chairs from across the Province.

A graduation portfolio is a four-credit graduation requirement. Students create a portfolio showcasing their achievements in six key areas: arts and design; community involvement; career planning; employability skills; information technology; and, personal health. Students need more than academic skills to be successful beyond high school and graduation portfolios help to ensure B.C. graduates are prepared.

To help students, parents and teachers, government will make a video that demonstrates the portfolio process, create a more comprehensive website with samples of student portfolios, and establish an email response site and a 1-800 helpline so that parents and students can easily ask questions.

Government will also provide $180,000 for additional information resources and tools:

- $75,000 to reward schools and districts already guiding students, parents and teachers through the graduation portfolio requirements;
- $55,000 to the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils to co-ordinate a series of parent workshops; and,
- $50,000 to school districts to help hold parent information nights.

Finally, the Province will hold a forum to discuss what else can be done. ***Read More.***

"The Queen's Feet"
Written by Sarah Ellis
Illustrated by Dusan Petricic

Reading Corner

Queen Daisy prefers fuzzy slippers, flip flops and striped socks to ballroom shoes and the bossy-boots king-next-door. Everyone from the wise-women to the footmen try to solve the royal problem of the queen's fanciful feet. Sarah Ellis has won a Governor General's Award, the BC Book Prize, and more. She works as a librarian and this newly-released book, suitable for students in grades K–4, was suggested by her peers at the North Vancouver District Public Library.

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Education

Last week was Education Week, a time to celebrate B.C.'s wonderful education system. I was proud to be part of a special ceremony in the legislature to honour eight outstanding individuals for their achievements and contributions.

Ariane Ouellette, a Grade 12 student at L'École Victor Brodeur in Victoria, recently participated in the Dictée des Amériques—the world's largest French-language spelling and grammar competition. Ariane came in first of all B.C. participants. She determined to do this after placing second last year, which I think shows an admirable work ethic, and a willingness to set higher goals.

Nick Prince had a troubled youth and dropped out of school. When Nick's son asked him why, and if school was really important, Nick didn't default to the "do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do" adage, but led by example. Nick is the first adult to complete his Grade 12 graduation requirements at the Canucks Family Education Centre. I was thrilled when he told me that he now helps kids in his community read to succeed in school, and in life.

I have been visiting school districts across B.C. and am pleased to say that while Ariane and Nick are examples of excellence, they represent the shared values that make our education system among the best in the world.

I invite you to read more about Ariane and Nick, as well as an award-winning trustee, superintendent, principal, teacher, parent, and bus driver. You will be inspired!

Read More.